

## Newsletter Spring 2010

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# HEALTHY KIDS BETTER STUDENTS

**MASSACHUSETTS  
COORDINATED  
SCHOOL HEALTH PROGRAM**

**W**elcome to the spring edition of the Coordinated School Health (CSH) newsletter! In each issue of our seasonal newsletters, we focus on one topic relating to school health concerns—including the latest research, success stories and action steps for schools. This issue highlights tobacco. Although smoking has decreased in recent years, tobacco use is still a problem. Nearly all adult smokers start before they are 18 years old, and in Massachusetts 7,200 youth become smokers each year.

If you have any questions about our program or need assistance implementing Coordinated School Health or Wellness Policies, please contact us.

Thanks and have a healthy day!

**Carol Goodenow**

CSH Director, ESE  
[CGoodenow@doe.mass.edu](mailto:CGoodenow@doe.mass.edu)

**Laura York**

CSH Director, DPH  
[Laura.York@state.ma.us](mailto:Laura.York@state.ma.us)



*A partnership  
of the Massachusetts  
Departments of  
Elementary and  
Secondary Education  
and Public Health.*

## Coordinated School Health (CSH)

CSH is a joint initiative between the Massachusetts Departments of Elementary and Secondary Education and Public Health funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Adolescent and School Health (CDC/DASH). Our team's primary goal is to improve school policies, environment and instruction relating to physical activity, nutrition, tobacco and other health issues. Research shows that improvement in these areas not only contributes to the healthy development of students but to their academic success as well.



In order to accomplish these goals, we promote the Coordinated School Health model as an approach where all school health-related activities are integrated within the school and community in an effort to enhance the health and academic outcomes of students. This model provides a framework for creating linkages between nine existing components:

**Health Education • Physical Education • Health Services  
Food and Nutrition Services • Counseling, Psychological and  
Social Services • Safe and Healthful School Environment  
• Health Promotion for Staff • Family/Community  
Involvement • Family and Consumer Sciences Education**

CSH staff provide training, technical assistance and resources to schools to promote the healthy development of Massachusetts youth. Additionally, CSH collects the biannual School Health Profiles surveys on health-related programs in Massachusetts middle and high schools and works to increase coordination among state-level agencies and organizations working in school health. To learn more, please visit [www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/CSHP](http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/CSHP).

## CSH Staff Update

**Amy O'Neil** is the new Physical Activity, Nutrition, Tobacco (PANT)/Health Education Coordinator at the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Amy assists schools in helping strengthen their health education policies and programs related to physical activity, nutrition, tobacco and other health education topics. Please contact her if you have any questions or need assistance with your Health Education programs.



**Amy O'Neil**  
[aoneil@doe.mass.edu](mailto:aoneil@doe.mass.edu)  
781-338-6450

## Research Update

### A Dangerous Increase in Smokeless Tobacco Use

While anti-smoking advocates have been celebrating incredible successes in smoking reductions, an ominous trend has quietly emerged in use of smokeless tobacco such as chewing tobacco, snuff, or dip. Smokeless tobacco has carcinogens and can cause oral cancers and nicotine addiction. The 2009 Youth Risk Behavior Survey shows that 8% of Massachusetts high school students currently use smokeless tobacco, nearly doubling the rate reported in 2003. The number is even higher when only males are considered: a full 14% of them reported using smokeless tobacco in the month prior to the survey.

Not surprisingly, this increase has coincided with the recent influx of new smokeless tobacco products and their advertising. Smokeless tobacco now comes in many forms beyond the traditional snuff and chewing tobacco such as dissolvable sticks, strips, lozenges, tablets, and gum. One such product is snus, a small teabag-like pouch containing dissolvable tobacco that doesn't require spitting, making it easy to conceal. Many of these products come in fruit and candy flavors which make them even more appealing to young people and therefore more worrisome.

For more information on new tobacco products, please visit: [www.makesmokinghistory.org](http://www.makesmokinghistory.org) and go to the Youth section. The site includes fact sheets, pictures of products and suggestions about what schools and individuals can do to protect youth from these tobacco industry tactics.

## School Tobacco Policies - No Ifs, Ands or Butts.

The number of Massachusetts high school students who smoke has been slowly declining since 1995 but 16% still report smoking cigarettes in the past month. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the most effective way for schools to reduce tobacco use among students is to implement a comprehensive tobacco program with the following components:

- Adopt a strong policy prohibiting use of all tobacco products by students, school staff, parents, and visitors on school property, in school vehicles, and at school functions 24 hours a day and seven days a week.
- Prohibit tobacco advertising in school buildings, at school functions, and in school publications.
- Ensure that students in grades K-12 receive instruction on avoiding tobacco use.
- Provide access and referral to cessation programs for students and school staff.
- Help students who violate the policy to quit using tobacco rather than only punishing them.

Currently, only 57% of schools in Massachusetts prohibit all tobacco use at all times in all locations, so many schools across our state need to re-examine their tobacco policies and ensure they are as thorough as possible. Once a strong policy is in place, it is critical that it be strictly enforced and communicated to all students, staff, parents and visitors. Schools should also encourage parents and the community to participate in efforts to prevent tobacco use and addiction. This way, positive messages to students about being tobacco free can be reinforced in many different settings.

For more information on school tobacco guidelines, please visit the following websites:  
**CDC Guidelines for School Health Programs to Prevent Tobacco Use and Addiction**  
[www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/tobacco/guidelines](http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/tobacco/guidelines)

**Massachusetts Tobacco Control Program (MTCP) School Tobacco Policies**  
[www.makesmokinghistory.org/en\\_US/youth/schools/policy.html](http://www.makesmokinghistory.org/en_US/youth/schools/policy.html)



# Massachusetts Success Stories: Tobacco

## The 84 Movement: Fighting Big Tobacco in Oxford, MA

"We may be small in numbers, but we are determined to take on Big Tobacco. Even though we don't have the \$13.4 billion to spend on advertising like tobacco companies, we do have a voice and we are determined to be heard." This quote from an Oxford High School (OHS) youth who is part of The 84 Movement, illustrates the passion and commitment that is so representative of OHS youth who are fighting Big Tobacco in their community and around the state.

Since 2008, OHS youth have been a part of The 84 Movement, a statewide youth tobacco prevention movement that represents the 84% of youth in Massachusetts who choose not to smoke.

With enthusiasm for fighting Big Tobacco, 20 OHS youth formed an 84 Chapter in their school under the advisement of health teacher Ms. Dixie Lawrence and with support from Principal Kevin Wells and Assistant Principal Dave Nugent. These teens quickly began spreading the message in their school that most youth don't smoke. Within their first year as an 84 Chapter, they effectively mobilized as many as 400 of their OHS peers to spread The 84's positive social norms message. Their energy helped them win a statewide competition called "iConnect to Win!" This competition asked youth to complete "missions" in their school to spread The 84's

message, such as writing poems about their positive alternatives to smoking, composing songs about The 84, and listing their reasons for staying smoke-free.

This year, the OHS 84 Chapter was awarded a \$4,000 mini-grant from The 84 Movement to conduct a survey of retail stores in their community to assess the amount of tobacco advertising on storefront windows. The OHS 84 Chapter plans to present the findings of their survey to state lawmakers during the Kick Butts Day Event at the Statehouse on March 24, 2010.



Eventually, their aim is to use the information they gather to pass policies to limit Big Tobacco's marketing to youth in Oxford. As said by an OHS 84 Chapter member, "The tobacco companies

use many techniques to persuade the public to purchase their product. We want to expose the truth behind these false ads and show how they are tricking the members of our community. The time has come for us to do every little bit we can to make a dent in the profits of Big Tobacco."

In addition to their leadership and advocacy in the community, OHS 84 Chapter members are also role models for other Oxford youth. They have conducted student assemblies at middle schools about being smoke-free, asked their high school peers to sign smoke-free pledges, and provided resources to youth to help them support loved ones who want to quit smoking. They have also

collected stories from teachers in their school to learn about why they choose not to smoke or how they were able to quit smoking. Oxford High School youth are fighting Big Tobacco in powerful and positive ways, and truly represent what it means to be a part of The 84!

The 84 Movement is funded by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and managed by Health Resources in Action. For more information about The 84 Movement, please contact Brittany Chen at [bchen@hria.org](mailto:bchen@hria.org) or 617-279-2240 x324.

## Taking On Emerging Tobacco Products in Lawrence, MA

The tobacco industry knows that to stay in business, it needs to hook young people as customers. By continuing to change their tactics, tobacco companies are able to circumvent new laws and regulations that are put into place to restrict tobacco's influence on young people. The latest in the tobacco industry's bag of tricks are new tobacco products – like candy-flavored dissolvable tobacco. These are specifically marketed toward youth with fun candy flavors and packaging that easily disguises the product so that it is not detected by teachers, nurses or parents.

At a fall meeting of the Lawrence School Health Advisory Council, Diane Knight, Director of the Northern Essex Tobacco Free Community Partnership, presented on emerging tobacco products and brought samples of these new

products. Amazed at what they saw, Mary Cordaro, Prevention Specialist for the Lawrence Public Schools (LPS), invited Knight to make her presentation to all LPS health teachers in December. During her presentation, she shared samples of the many different types and flavors of tobacco that are in convenience stores. Teachers were speechless when they saw the cleverly disguised tobacco products, such as dissolvable tobacco packaged in tins that look like breath mints.

Compelled by the information in the presentation, Health and Nursing Services Coordinator for the LPS, Kathleen DeFillippo, began working with Knight in an effort to extend this new tobacco product training to all LPS teachers, staff and parents.

Knowledge is power. With all staff aware of the products and packaging, the Lawrence Public Schools will be better able to counter the tobacco industry's tactics.

Do you have a success story in the areas of nutrition, physical education/activity, tobacco, other health issues or coordination in your school? If so, we'd love to hear from you and feature your story in an upcoming newsletter to inspire others. You will also receive printed copies of the newsletter for you to distribute. Please email your successes to: [Laura.York@state.ma.us](mailto:Laura.York@state.ma.us)

## Tobacco Cessation Training

The Northeastern University School Health Institute, in collaboration with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) School Health Unit and the University of Massachusetts Medical School Division of Preventive and Behavioral Medicine (UMMS), is offering Tobacco Cessation Training Programs for School Nurses. These trainings are based on research conducted by UMass and the MDPH regarding youth tobacco cessation in the school setting.<sup>1</sup>

The School Nurse Delivered Smoking Cessation Training Program uses a one-to-one four-session intervention curriculum that is designed to assist adolescents to stop smoking by helping them to understand and develop a plan for managing nicotine withdrawal symptoms and using behavioral strategies to cope with the challenges experienced through the process of quitting smoking.

The training program for nurses was first held on December 8, 2009, and was very well received. At the conclusion of the course, attendees are able to: (1) describe the challenges to adolescent smoking cessation, (2) implement an intervention curriculum for one-to-one school nurse delivered cessation, and (3) review data on the success of the intervention.

The next training is **May 13, 2010**. The target audience is high school nurses; however if space is available, middle school nurses may also apply. **To register, visit [www.neushi.ceedutest.com](http://www.neushi.ceedutest.com)**

<sup>1</sup>Pbert, L., Osganian, S., Gorak, Druker, S., Reed, G., O'Neill, K., Sheetz, A. School Nurse-delivered Adolescent Smoking Cessation Intervention: A Randomized Controlled Trial, *Preventive Medicine*; 2006;43: 313-320.



## Youth Stand Up to Big Tobacco

The 84 is the Massachusetts statewide youth tobacco prevention movement that engages youth to make their communities healthier and tobacco free. This year, 50 youth groups across MA established “84 Chapter” youth groups in their schools and communities. The chapter groups work to promote The 84 movement, support local tobacco policy change, and expose the tobacco industry’s marketing tactics. As members of a chapter of The 84, youth raise awareness among their peers and in their communities about the effects of tobacco use and the techniques used by the tobacco industry to hook youth on their products.

Chapters of The 84 are provided with a toolkit, materials, resources, and training to carry out tobacco prevention activities in their schools or communities. Chapters are eligible to participate in contests and competitions to raise awareness of The 84 and fight Big Tobacco’s influence among their peers. More advanced chapters are eligible for small grant awards to conduct community research and promote policy change.

Massachusetts youth can start or join an 84 Chapter! Youth must be in high school or of high school age. All chapters must have an adult advisor. Some free training and 84 materials are available to support chapter activities. For further information or if you know of a school or an organization that would like to start a chapter, contact Tamaki Sakakibara at [tsaka@hria.org](mailto:tsaka@hria.org) or 617-279-2240 ext.215 or visit [www.the84.org](http://www.the84.org).

## Are you on the list?

Every week, our program sends out a variety of school health-related resources and information such as new health research, professional development offerings and grant opportunities. If you are not on our listserv, please send an email to [CMilligan@doe.mass.edu](mailto:CMilligan@doe.mass.edu) and ask to be added. Also, if you have any school health dilemmas and would like input from other members, feel free to send your questions to the above email to be forwarded to the group.



Massachusetts Department of  
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Massachusetts Department of  
Elementary and Secondary Education

75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148  
(781) 338-3000 • [www.doe.mass.edu](http://www.doe.mass.edu)



Massachusetts Department  
of Public Health

250 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02108  
(617) 624-6000 • [www.mass.gov/dph](http://www.mass.gov/dph)